

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 12 and 13 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein. Please amend Claim 11 as shown below.

1 to 10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A photovoltaic element comprising:  
a metal substrate;  
a photovoltaic layer provided on the metal substrate;  
a transparent electrode layer provided on the photovoltaic layer; and  
a rear surface side bus-bar electrode having a portion welded to a non-light-receiving surface side of the metal substrate, for electrically connecting the rear surface side bus-bar electrode to the metal substrate,

wherein a first transparent-electrode-layer-removed portion which does not contain the transparent electrode layer is provided at an outer periphery of the metal substrate, and

wherein a second transparent-electrode-layer removed portion which does not contain the transparent electrode layer is provided in a region to which the welded portion of the rear surface side bus-bar electrode is opposed, with the metal substrate disposed between said region and the welded portion, and

wherein the second transparent-electrode-layer removed portion is island-shaped, such that the second transparent-electrode layer removed portion is surrounded by the transparent electrode layer.

12 and 13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) The photovoltaic element according to claim 11, wherein a current-collecting electrode for collecting power generated in the photovoltaic layer through the transparent electrode is disposed on the second transparent-electrode-layer-removed-portion, with an insulating member disposed between the current-collecting electrode and the second transparent-electrode-layer-removed-portion.

15. (Previously Presented) The photovoltaic element according to claim 11, wherein a plurality of current-collecting electrodes for collecting power generated in the photovoltaic layer is provided on the transparent electrode layer, and the second transparent-electrode-layer-removed portion is provided between the plurality of current-collecting electrodes.

16. (Previously Presented) The photovoltaic element according to claim 11, further comprising: a plurality of current-collecting electrodes for collecting power generated in the photovoltaic layer through the transparent electrode layer; and a bus-bar electrode for collecting power from the plurality of current-collecting electrodes.

17. (Previously Presented) A photovoltaic element module obtained by connecting the photovoltaic element according to claim 16 in plurality, wherein the bus-bar electrode of one of the plurality of photovoltaic elements and the rear surface side bus-bar

electrode of another one of the plurality of photovoltaic elements are electrically connected to each other.